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Rural District Council of Wells.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1925.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

WELLS, SOMERSET, April 8th, 1926.

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1925.

Circular 648 issued by the Ministry of Health, 10th December, 1925, requires this to be a Survey Report.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area : 58,045 Acres.

Population (Census 1921) : 10,150. Approximate to 1925, 10,510.

Geology : Dolomitic Conglomerate at Chewton Mendip, and Westbury, Mountain Limestone at Priddy, Red Marl at Dinder, North Wootton, and Rodney Stoke, Red Marl and River Gravel at Wookey, Lower Lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough and Walton, Alluvium and Peat at Glastonbury Moor, Meare and Godney.

Number of Inhabited Houses, 1921 : (approximately 2360).

Rateable Value : £118,741.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate : £241.

Occupation : Chiefly Agricultural ; Cheese and Cider making, Dairy Farming, Paper Factories at Wookey and Wookey Hole, Stone Quarrying in various parts of the District, some of the Inhabitants at Butleigh and Walton work at Shoe, Leather and Skin Factories at Street and Glastonbury.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

		Total.	M.	F.	Birth Rate (RG) 16·27
Births	Legitimate ...		85	76	
	Illegitimate ...		7	3	
		171	92	79	
		Total.	M.	F.	Death Rate (RG) 11·7
Deaths		123	66	57	

Number of women dying in or in consequence of childbirth : Nil.

Infantile Mortality : 9 (one being illegitimate) died under one year of age, giving a rate of Infantile Mortality of 52·63 per 1000 births. Under 1 week, 3 ; 1 to 4 weeks, 4 ; 1 to 6 months, 1 ; 6 to 12 months, 1 ; Premature Birth accounted for, 2 ; Convulsions, 2 ; Marasmus, 1 ; Acute Bronchitis, 1 ; Broncho Pneumonia, 1 ; Pulmonary Œdema, 1 ; Meninges Myelocèle, 1

Deaths from Measles (all ages) : Nil.

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) : Nil.

Deaths from Diarrhœa (under two years of age) : Nil.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE DURING THE YEAR.

Diphtheria. --Total Cases, 12. Ages 5, 5, 6, 8, 10, 10, 18, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27. Scarlet Fever—Total Cases, 7. Ages 2, 3, 4, 17, 19, 21, 29. Enteric Fever—One Case. Age 29. Puerperal Fever—One Case. Age 23. Ophthalmia Neonatorum—Total Cases 2 Ages each 5 days. Pneumonia—Total Cases 18. Primary Pneumonia—8. Influenzal Pneumonia—3. Bronchial Pneumonia—3. Lobar Pneumonia—4. Primary Pneumonia.—Ages 5 Months, 2, 3, 17, 24, 25, 42, 49. Influenzal Pneumonia—Ages 25, 52, 82. Bronchial Pneumonia—Ages 5, 18, 26. Lobar Pneumonia—Ages 20, 33, 47, 72 Pulmonary Tuberculosis—17 Cases notified. 11 Males, 6 Females. Ages 1 to 5 years, 1 ; 5 to 10 years, 4 ; 20 to 35 years, 4 ; 35 to 45 years, 6 ; 60 to 65 years, 2.

Two of these were notified from the County Mental Hospital.

Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis.—5 Cases notified. 4 Male, 1 Female. Ages 3½, 10, 21, 26, 64.

Disease.	Cases Notified.	Number of Deaths.	Removed to Hospital.
Diphtheria ...	12	Nil.	1
Scarlet Fever ...	7	Nil.	5
Enteric Fever ...	1	Nil.	Nil.
Puerperal Fever ...	1	Nil.	Nil.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	2	Nil.	1
Pneumonia ...	18	8	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	17	3	1
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis	5	Nil.	Nil.

Two of the Pulmonary Tuberculosis Cases occurred in the County Mental Hospital.

Causes of Sickness—There have been no special causes of sickness in the District during the year.

Hospitals—Tuberculosis—These are provided by the County Council. Maternity, Children, Fever and Small Pox Hospital: Nil.

An arrangement exists with the Shepton Mallet Isolation Hospital Committee for the admittance of Patients suffering from Infectious Disease, when considered necessary by the Medical Officer of Health. No Institution provision for un-married Mothers, illegitimate and homeless children, exists in the District.

No Ambulance facilities are provided.

Attendance is made weekly by the County Tuberculosis Officer at Glastonbury, and a considerable number of Patients attend here from the Rural Area. The homes of notified cases are visited by the Sanitary Inspector and myself, as well as by the County Health Visitors.

In cases of Diphtheria and Cerebro Spinal Meningitis use is made of the County Bacteriological Laboratory, and Anti-Toxin is supplied by the District Council when applied for by the Medical men practising in the District.

Public Health Officers of the District Council:—

Medical Officer of Health (part time).—Dr. R. B. Manning, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (London).

Sanitary Inspector (whole time). Philip Williams, Certificate Royal Sanitary Institute.

Professional Nursing.—District Nurses under Local Associations and Health Visitors appointed by the County Council, the latter keep us well informed as to the existence of Tuberculosis. In cases of Infectious Disease Nurses are provided by the District Council when the Medical Officer of Health considers it necessary.

Clinics.—There is an Infant Welfare Centre in Wells, which is used by many people residing in the Rural Area. School and Tuberculosis and Orthopædia Clinics are provided by the County Council.

Midwives.—The Lists are kept by the County Medical Officer of Health to whom they report all births, and all abnormal circumstances arising therefrom.

Laboratory Work.—The County Council have a Laboratory at Weston-super-Mare, there samples are examined both bacteriologically and chemically.

The Council have Building Bye-Laws in force, modelled on the Ministrys Model Bye-Laws, with regard to New Buildings. They were adopted in 1917. In 1909 the Council made Regulations with regard to the drainage, ventilation and cleanliness of Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

The Sanitary Inspector keeps a Register of all persons carrying on the trade of a Dairyman, Cowkeeper or Purveyor of Milk in the District, also a separate Register of Retail Milk Traders, this is kept up to date by making the necessary additions and marking off removals.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.—Chewton Mendip is supplied from the Waldegrave Estate Supply, Dinder by the Dinder Estate Supply, Dulcote by a Private Supply vested in the various Owners.

Haybridge, Wookey Hole, and Bath Road, Wells, are supplied by the Wells Corporation, East and West Horrington are supplied by the Rural District Council, from a spring in the Watchet Hills. The water being conveyed from this Spring to a reservoir by gravitation and thence through the two Villages. This is a really good constant supply, with little chance of contamination as it is derived from the Old Red Sand-stone.

North Wootton is supplied by the District Council in a somewhat similar manner to that of the Horrington Supply. Butleigh is supplied from the Butleigh Estate Supply, belonging to R Neville Grenville, Esq. Priddy is supplied by the Fountain, which is fed from a spring in the woods, conveyed to the centre of the Village by gravitation, from whence the people fetch it.

West Pennard is supplied by the District Council from the Glastonbury Corporation Supply by agreement with the Glastonbury Town Council. Baltonsborough is also supplied by the District Council, a branch main from the Ditchat Water Supply, by agreement with the Shepton Mallet Rural District Council.

Rodney Stoke, Polsham, Godney, and Sharpham are chiefly supplied by the Street Urban District Council, by arrangement, from their supply derived from Rodney Stoke.

Easton, Westbury, Draycott, Wookey, Henton, Meare and Walton are mainly dependent on wells for their supplies.

Rivers and Streams.—There has been very little pollution of the Rivers and Streams in the District, owing to the improvements made by the Wells City Council with regard to the discharge of their Sewage Effluent, and by the Paper Mills with their Effluents.

Drainage and Sewerage.—There is no general system of Sewerage in the District, nor a regular system for the disposal of excrement, the greater part of the latter being disposed of on the land.

At Chewton Mendip, Draycott, Rodney Stoke, West Pennard, Walton, Dinder, and Wookey there are Sewers, with House Drains discharging into them, and these discharge either into the River, or on to the Moors, or into ditches or on the land, according as they are situated respectively, but it is somewhat impracticable to have a full system of Sewers with Sewage Disposal Works in such a scattered district.

Closet Accommodation.—There are a fair number of Water Closets provided, especially in the parts of the Districts where they have Water Supplies. In the other parts of the District Earth or Pail Closets are mostly in evidence. Also there are Privies with the usual Cess-Pits behind, but many of these have been done away with and Earth Closets substituted.

Scavenging.—There is no general system of scavenging in the District, the House Refuse being disposed of by the House-holders usually upon their gardens. The same system applies to the removal of the excreta from the Earth Closets and Cess-Pits.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

The following is a Summary of the cases reported by me to the Council and dealt with by order :—

	No. of Cases.
Dwelling Houses overcrowded	1
Dwelling Houses unfit for habitation	1
Dilapidated and filthy dwellings, repaired and cleansed	1
Infected dwellings. Occupiers served with notice as to isolation of Patients, and disinfection, disinfectants supplied by the Council	35
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health	26
Public School Premises disinfected	1
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, etc. ...	4
Dilapidated Privies repaired	3
Privies turned into W.C.'s	3
New drains laid and old ones repaired	4
Old Sewer repaired	1
Samples of Drinking Water sent to the County Laboratory for analysis ...	16
New Wells sunk in place of ones condemned	2
Premises inspected under the Petroleum and Carbide Acts, Licenses granted	25
Bakehouses, Slaughterhouses inspected	24
Public School Premises inspected	21
Informal Notices served by the Inspector	19
Statutory Notices served	2
Legal Proceedings taken (Maximum Fine inflicted)	1
Closing Orders determined by the Council	2

The work of repairs asked for was in nearly every case very soon carried out, the Council only found it necessary in two cases during the year to serve Statutory Notices, one being a case of using an unfit place for a dwelling house, and this was then closed. The other was for depositing Offal on to the fields close to the Highway, and eventually we were forced to take proceedings, and the defendant was convicted and fined the maximum penalty.

Schools.—The sanitary condition of the School premises in the District is fairly good. The water supplies to the schools is practically the same as given in the report upon the water supply of the district.

With regard to the steps taken to prevent the spread of Infectious Disease in Schools, upon receipt of a notification of a case, the Medical Officer of Health issues an Order to the Head Teacher of the School where the children from the infected house attend, excluding all children from that house from school until further notice. When the cases are better, he gives them about ten further days, and then issues an admission order.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1909.

There are registered in the District 16 Factories, 119 Workshops and Workplaces, 8 Bakehouses, 16 Slaughterhouses, and 25 Homeworkers. These premises are kept under observation, especially the Bakehouses and Slaughterhouses, and are generally in a fairly clean and satisfactory condition.

DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS ORDER, 1885, AND THE AMENDMENT ORDER, 1922.

During the year 17 applications were made for registration under the Dairy Orders as Cow-keepers and Purveyors of Milk, there were 12 Removals, thus making 519 names now on the Register.

As Retail Purveyors there were 5 applications to be registered, and there were 10 Removals, there now being 154 names registered, but few of these are really Retailers of Milk, the greater proportion being Farmers who sell a little milk at the door if people fetch it, there are only 12 who take milk round and deliver it.

Distributors who are also Producers, 12. Distributors alone, Nil.

All the rest of the producers sell their milk mainly wholesale, i.e., 507 sell their Milk direct to the Factories or send it to one of the larger Towns. Chiefly to Bristol and London.

Regular and systematic inspection of all premises registered is made, the marking system as recommended by the County Medical Officer of Health is in use, and proves to be a good scheme for comparisons of my various visits. I have given specific instructions to all the producers of milk with regard to the cleansing of all utensils and the keeping of Yards, Stalls and the Cows themselves clean, and I must say that in many instances I have noticed considerable improvement.

I have arranged for two series of Clean Milk Demonstrations to take place in the District, and altogether we have had 12 of these, and they were fairly well attended, but not so well as they should have been considering the importance of the work, but the good results of these have been observed when I have taken samples of the milk as delivered at the Dairy Factories, the worst of the samples coming from Farms, where neither the Farmer or his Men had taken the trouble to attend a Demonstration.

With regard to the Dairies and Stalls I still contend that the onus of putting these into proper order should be upon the Owners of the property and not upon the person registered.

TUBERCULOUS CATTLE.—A number of these have been slaughtered during the year, but in only one instance has the Medical Officer of Health and myself been called in by the Police, and in this case we had to condemn the whole carcase.

There are no Licenses granted in the District for the Sale of Milk under Special Designation.

There have been no refusals to license or revocations of licenses to Retailers of Milk.

No samples of Milk have been submitted for bacteriological tests.

MEAT.—The Order is being carried out as far as possible, all the Butchers give notice, as required of the times of slaughtering, and whenever possible I visit, and examine the meat so killed, and any meat I have had to condemn, has been immediately buried by the Butcher upon whose premises it was.

In most cases the meat is delivered throughout the Villages by either closed Carts or Motor Vehicles.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

		In 1920.	In Jan., 1925.	In Dec., 1925.
Registered	...	2	2	2
Licensed	...	13	15	14

Of the registered premises three have shops attached to the premises. Six slaughter and do not sell in the District, the meat being sent direct to London Market. One is at the County Mental Hospital. Five are only used occasionally, and the others slaughter and take the meat round in closed vehicles.

Since the passing of the New Orders there are but very few of the Tuberculous Cattle brought to the Slaughterhouse, these are mainly taken by the Police and sent to

the Knacker, previous to this One Butcher in this area, especially was in the habit of killing a large number of these animals.

BAKEHOUSES.—There are 8 Bakehouses in the District, these are kept in a clean and satisfactory state, being regularly lime-washed and well looked after.

HOUSING.

There is no real shortage of Houses in the District, there are more houses being erected each year by private enterprise than there were before the War, thus keeping the numbers fairly well up.

I have only had one case of Overcrowding to deal with during the year, and this was entirely the fault of the Tenant by bringing other people to reside in her House, and was soon abated.

Also there has only been one case of premises unfit for habitation, this place was never intended for use as a dwelling, and is closed.

Two Houses, for which Closing Orders had become operative, have during the year been put into really good order, and the Closing Orders have since been withdrawn.

The general standard of houses in the District is very fair, the main defects found are leaky roofs and insufficient ventilation.

PARISH OF BALTONSBOROUGH.—In 1921 there were 142 Houses, 3 new houses have been erected since then, making a total now of 145. There are not any new ones in course of erection.

PARISH OF BUTLEIGH.—There are still 173 Houses as in 1921, and there are not any new ones in the course of erection.

PARISH OF CHEWTON MENDIP.—There were 177 Houses in 1921, since then one new one has been erected, and there is one in the course of erection.

PARISH OF ST. CUTHBERT OUT.—In 1921 there were 407 Houses, 12 new ones have since been erected, making a total of 419 houses, and there are 10 new houses in the course of erection.

PARISH OF DINDER.—There are as in 1921, 51 Houses, and there is one new one in the course of erection.

PARISH OF GODNEY.—There are still as in 1921, 71 Houses. There are not any in the course of erection.

PARISH OF MEARE.—In 1921 there were 220 Houses, 9 new ones have since been erected, making a total of 229. There are not any in the course of erection.

PARISH OF NORTH WOOTTON.—There are as in 1921, 68 Houses. There are not any in the course of erection.

PARISH OF PRIDDY.—There were 40 Houses in 1921. One new one has since been erected, there are not any in the course of erection.

PARISH OF RODNEY STOKE.—In 1921 there were 172 Houses, 3 new ones have since been erected, making a total of 175, and there is one in course of erection.

PARISH OF SHARPHAM.—In 1921 there were 20 Houses. Three new ones have since been erected, making a total of 23, there are none in the course of erection.

PARISH OF WALTON.—As in 1921 there are still 102 Houses, there are none in the course of erection.

PARISH OF WESTBURY-SUB-MENDIP.—There were 137 Houses in 1921. Since then one new one has been erected. There are none in the course of erection.

PARISH OF WEST PENNARD.—There are as in 1921, 184 Houses, and there is one in the course of erection.

PARISH OF WOOKEY.—In 1921 there were 218 Houses. Four new houses have since been erected, making a total of 222. There are not any in the course of erection.

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Total number of Houses erected during the year, 13.

By the Local Authority, Nil. By private enterprise, 13.

Number of places found to be unfit for habitation, 1. This was closed after Statutory Notice had been served.

Number of Dwelling Houses on which Closing Orders were issued, Nil.

Number of Dwelling Houses on which Closing Orders were determined, 2.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, Your obedient servant,

R. B. MANNING,

Medical Officer of Health.

